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he should himself be a worker in any particular form of Art, though he should be familiar with the processes of each. Artists in general do not make good critics, though their special suggestions are of great use to each other; they work within prescribed circles and cannot easily go forth from them to assume new centers of view; they see through the haze of their own ideas, to the expression of which all their hours are given. The critic then must be, not necessarily something more, but something else than an artist. Give him an executive power and you give him limitations which would cripple his critical power.

Such are some of the elements in the constitution of an Art-critic. Let all those who essay to instruct the public about Art and artists, learn and tremble.

### NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN.

#### FIRST ARTICLE.

A general view of the pending Exhibition of the Academy shows that it is marked by fewer large and imposing works than the display of last year. We observe no full-length portraits with ample margin of canvas, arrogating an amount of space far more than commensurate with the interest of their subjects. The landscapes, also, are smaller; Gignoux's "Glimpse of Mt. Blanc" is the only one conspicuous in size. We shall not deplore the general absence of large canvases; not, but that in certain subjects, size is an element of power; they, however, who can afford to give their time to the right elaboration of large pictures, can afford a special display of their work. But while the exhibition, on the first view, seems tamer and less interesting than the last, a more careful examination will, we think, reveal a greater number of works of real substantial merit. Certainly the Exhibition of this year is disfigured by fewer positively bad pictures, obtruded in conspicuous places. The Council seems to have exercised a wholesome restraint in certain directions, moved thereto, doubtless, by the severity of last year's current criticisms. It is not to be supposed, however, that they have attempted to be just, that they have not favored themselves first, and their particular friends next,—this were not in the course of Academic nature. There is ample proof on the walls that they have not consulted pure justice. Why, for instance, have they given Eugene Benson's "Cloud Towers" a position upon the line? The picture is utterly, irretrievably bad—bad in conception, utterly bad in execution. The answer is, because Mr. Benson has the entrée of some of the editorial sanctums of the city, and his favor must be propitiated. The alliance of cause and consequence is too plain for mistake. We are loth to express ourselves as we do about Mr. Benson's work, but its prominence forces us to plainness of speech. Mr. Benson wields a very facile pen, and we are surprised that the readable literary and the intolerable pictorial productions should come from the same hand.

But enough of fault-finding. We wish to retain our good humor, to preserve our most genial mood. We desire to extract as much honey from the exhibition as we can, and to distill as much as possible into the honeycomb of this journal. If a picture has no sweetness in it, and is not forced upon us, as is Mr. Benson's, we shall be very glad to pass it by in silence. Nevertheless, in the case of the really

nutritious pictures we mean to be discriminating, and, as far as our analytical powers will bear us out, to separate the sweet from the bitter or chaffy.

Having carefully gone the round of the rooms once—twice—thrice, we ask ourselves the question, which is the picture of the Exhibition? Gignoux's powerful, yet by no means unexceptionable, work recurs to mind. Constant Mayer's "Love's Melancholy" charms us with its delicate metaphysical sentiment; Eastman Johnson's "Comfort in Weariness," with its perfect genre painting, has deeply impressed us; and Wm. Hunt's three-quarter length portrait of a Mother and Child is by far the greatest in its kind upon the walls. McEntee's "October in the Kattskills" dwells in our memory with its sweet and rich foliage, its exquisite cloud-rendering, and its surprising gules of sunlight. Other works, as "November in New Jersey," by J. C. White; "Studies from Nature," by Eaton; "Tennessee" and "Studies by Wyant"; "Autumn Woods," by Whittredge; Griswold's "Last of the Ice;" a small landscape by Samuel Colman; Vedder's "Paysage Fiesole;" a "Moonlight" by Fuechsel, some mountain views by Bristol, and a few other works have, notwithstanding imperfections, left a decided and wholesome flavor of sweetness in our thought.

But the discriminating visitor to the gallery will not find in any landscape, excellent as many of them are, the great picture of the Exhibition. But if he will pause long enough in quiet receptivity before "The Gun Foundry" by J. F. Weir, the massive drawing of the work, the grand intermingling of fire-light from the molten metal with the light from the roof and the floating fumes of the furnaces, the distinctness of details amid the fume obscurity, the masterly centering of all expectation upon the pouring of the fiery and spluttering metal into the mold, in a word, the dramatic intensity of the scene and the occasion, will hold him spell-bound and breathless, until at last he will gain relief by pronouncing the work before him the greatest of the Exhibition.

### RAMBLES AMONG THE GALLERIES.

A good picture does not necessarily take the high rank of a work of art. Visiting our Academic shows and dealer's galleries, we find everywhere fair illustrations of life and manners, past and present, good imitations of natural things, pleasant combinations of color, all generally well composed and drawn, but—these things are not Art; you enter a gallery and, if you chance to be in an easy frame of mind, you are amused with the varied and brilliant show, but you carry away no deep and lasting impression, you could crush the whole butterfly collection in the hollow of your hand, there is nothing in it. Yet occasionally one meets with a work which stamps itself upon his heart or imagination; he leaves it refreshed, ennobled, serious.

The lover of Art—that *rara avis* which must be distinguished from the picture-fanciers, a numerous and noisy flock—will find at Avery's a work of this latter character. We refer to Washington Allston's "Vision of the Bloody Hand." The work is founded upon a scene in one of Mrs. Radcliffe's novels, wherein the original legend, from which the murder scene in "Macbeth" is derived, receives a new turn. But the work hardly needs the interpretation of the novel, it tells the story, and far more powerfully, for itself. The characters are a hired assassin and a monk, who urges him to

the deed of death. The assassin, reeking with the memory of past crimes, hesitating, sees a bloody hand beckoning him on. The monk, holding forth the light and grasping the hand of the assassin, peers forward, unmoved, to learn what it is so terrifies his mean associate. The feeling of the piece is quite other than that of the similar scene in "Macbeth." Two types of character are presented; on the one hand, the assassin, of sensual instincts and undeveloped mind, but yet impressible, capable of being swayed by the imagination, religious in his way, given to devout worship of the saints after the perpetration of the deed; on the other hand, the monk, having a developed forehead, a sharp, decisive nose, close, firm, thin lips,—but all this intellectual and executive character is pushed forward beyond the moral, it is isolated, there is no reverence, no belief, no impressibility, there is only a calm, relentless purpose and the close wit to carry it through. If the one is a brutal sensualist, he is yet human; the other has developed beyond humanity—he is a devil. The thrilling power of the work arises in great part from this contrast of character. The poor fellow who, with half-naked limbs, cringes almost to the ground from terror of the bloody hand, is pulled forward by the tall monk, in sombre robes, calm, fixed in purpose, sublimely overtopping the workings of imagination and the fears of conscience.

Washington Allston is acknowledged as, perhaps, the greatest name in American Art; yet few Americans are familiar with his works. Mr. Avery has done the New York public great service by adding this one to his gallery; we earnestly hope that he will from time to time include others of the artist's works, if only on loan for a short period of exhibition. Our Boston friends might be induced to do us barbarians that service.

Among the other works now at Avery's are a "Lake Scene" by Jas. M. Hart, "General Meade's Headquarters at Gettysburg" by Cropsey, "Autumn" by McEntee, a "Lake in the Adirondacks" by Fuechsel, one of Eastman Johnson's charming genre paintings, a "Swamp Scene" by Hope, and a large landscape by A. B. Durand, which contains in the foreground fine illustrations of his exquisite tree-drawing and grouping, and in the middle-ground a beautiful interfusion of light and mist, through which, nevertheless, a great variety of truthful detail may be discerned.

There is also at Avery's the portrait of Durand, by Elliott, which was included in last year's exhibition of the Academy. This portrait is to be engraved as a companion-piece to the portrait of Bryant by Durand, and to be published by subscription. We observe that the list of subscribers is already nearly full.

The names of Bryant and Durand have been associated for many years. They belong to the same cycle of poetry and art—a cycle which is now nearly rounded off. Many have dropped down by the wayside, or fallen like ripe fruit, and the few that remain are gray with years. There is much of a common quality in the poetry of Bryant and the landscape of Durand. Both poet and artist express a calm, reflective mood, both are filled with a simple yet profound moral sentiment, both are hermits of the woods and feel that the very mold is instinct with God, both are purely national and have looked to our own wilds for that primal inspiration which European civilization is wont to lose beneath its accumulated traditions and refinements. Honor to them, the bard and the artist, seers of nature, and let us hang their portraits, side by side, in our studios and our libraries!

At Snedecor's, Inness's magnificent landscape, "Peace and Plenty," may still be seen, and will, we understand, remain for a week or two on exhibition. Those who have not yet seen this work should take an early opportunity to do so; those who have, will not fail to visit it again and again. It is not difficult to pick out special defects in this picture, but these are of a partial bearing and do not impair the beautiful unity of the whole. The work is full of exquisite gradations, and is sweet and heart-full throughout. It is a land overflowing with milk and honey—a vale, through which a broad and calm river flows with peaceful bends, bordered by rich meadows and gently sloping hills. The middle-ground is especially sweet, the eye may feed upon it, as the grasses seem to feed upon the mellow afternoon sunlight which slants down from over the distant hills. Here, in this land, man may dwell in peace, bless God, and be content. The picture is a harvest song, flowing from a pure heart. God bless the makers of such pictures!

At Schaus' there is still on exhibition Hope's "Forest Glen." This is another genuine work, though differing in kind from that we have just mentioned. We understand it is to be sent in a few days to Boston, but we hope the time will be deferred yet awhile. We can ill spare pictures of this quality, which bring with them into the midst of the steaming press-work of our galleries the refreshing breezes of nature. We are at a loss to describe this picture, we would need depict the glen itself. Here are veritable trees, each after its kind, here are actual rocks as they are tumbled and worn by the brook, here are the mosses and the lichens, the half-fallen trees, the fallen ones moss-covered, in a word, all the richness and variety; seemingly, of such a covert in the woods. Withal, there is the coolness and seclusion of such a spot—you may almost hear the purling of the brook, you may almost sniff the odor of the mould. There is, too, no lack of effect. Indeed the picture is as remarkable for the brilliant management of sunlight as for the close study of details. But both flow from the same positive and exact mode of dealing. The picture may be called mere imitation. Be it so. That is what a landscape ought to be. It is for the most part the merest pretenders who cry out against imitation. Try it, if it is so easy. Unfortunately, to imitate nature requires a heart as well as a hand, an honest poetic receptivity, if not a creative power. Give us more of these imitations.

Goupil's, at this time, is especially rich in fine works. Among them is Bougereaux' "Les Oranges," a family group, exquisite in the minor modeling of child-forms, and delicate in its flesh-tints. Here, too, is a new picture of Beard, representing a vast concourse of bears in an open glade of the woods, gathered together on a festive occasion. The merry-makers are grouped in every attitude of bear-manity, some doing the honors of the table, some done-the-honors-of-the-table, some looking on with dignified reserve, others given up to all the coquetry and revel of the dance. It is funny, funny, funny!

**PORTRAIT OF MADAME DEMOREST.**—A work in portraiture has recently been executed by James Hope, which will interest greatly the world of fashion. It is a portrait of Madame Demorest, the originator of styles, the literary editress.

The physiognomist may read in the well-defined forehead that organizing power which was necessary for the creation of the vast busi-

ness which she now holds under her control, with its ramifications throughout the country, but he will also observe a peculiar modeling of the upper lip which is always characteristic of those who possess a delicate taste united with a ready executive power.

It is these faculties, well portrayed by the artist, which give to Madame Demorest a position not simply in the world of fashion, but in the world of letters. *Demorest's Monthly Magazine*, while it "arms and equips" the ladies with all those weapons which enable them to "waylay, to conquer, and command," combines a very entertaining miscellany—the contributions of some of our most graceful pens, together with well-executed engravings, principally representing our national scenery. If Madame Demorest could only lead our countrywomen to a truly national costume, she would render invaluable service as well to the cause of art as, probably, to the cause of health.

Mr. Hope, we learn, is soon about to leave the city for the hills of Vermont, to gather from the woods fresh materials for his elaborate and truthful handling.

#### GRAU'S GRAND ITALIAN OPERA COMPANY.

We are to have yet another opera season, which will carry our musical engagements nearly into the month of June. Mr. Grau, it seems, has had a brilliant success at Havana with his Italian company, realizing a large amount of money, although he was utterly opposed to the voyage in the first place, and yielding at last very unwillingly to the advice of his agent. His season at Havana was marked by striking and curious events. One was the breaking up of an old established custom, which was very oppressive upon operatic managers, namely, the clubbing together to purchase boxes for the season. Thus, two families buy one box, and using it alternately, deprive the management of just one half the patronage, and half the emolument, eight persons enjoying the operatic season at the price for four. This custom was also oppressive in many ways, and Mr. Grau's agent, Mr. De Vivo, determined to break it up. He called a consultation with influential gentlemen and leaders of the press, and explained his intentions to them. They pronounced it impracticable, an innovation that the public would not tolerate, and advised him not to attempt it. But he was determined, and got them at last to promise not to oppose it, but to let him answer whatever communications were sent to the press. The public fought stoutly for three or four days, then yielded to arguments which they could not refute, and subscribed liberally.

The most curious event was the seeming total failure of the company for the first two or three nights. Whether the public still felt sore at the infringement upon its rights, or the company was out of sorts, certain it is that the whole affair threatened to end in a fiasco, when of a sudden the clouds dispersed, the sky brightened, and everything went on harmoniously and successfully. Several of the company became immense favorites, and were extolled in extravagant terms by both the press and the public, and a second season was begun which proved a mine of wealth to the management.

Of the artists forming the company which will appear at the Academy of Music on Thursday evening next, we know nothing personally, with the exception of that grand and passionate artist, Gazzaniga, whose successes are still fresh in the memory of our musical public. Of several, report speaks very highly, more

especially of Signorina Boschetti and Signor Anastasi, who were the especial favorites of the Havanese. The company is composed of the following artists:

*Soprani*—Mme. Gazzaniga, Noel Guidi, Boschetti, and Simons-Muzio.

*Contralti*—Mme. Cast Volini and Olga Ol-gini.

*Tenori*—Musiani and Anastasi.

*Baritoni*—Orlandini and Fellini.

*Primo-Basso*—Milleri.

*Secondo-Basso*—Vollini and Colletti.

*Musical Director*—Signor Muzio.

The repertoire of the company comprises all the standard works used at our opera houses, with the modern additions of "Faust," "L'Africaine," and "Fra Diavolo." There is considerable curiosity manifested by the public to hear these artists, which we trust will result in a liberal patronage. The subscription books for a season of ten nights are now open.

#### GERMAN OPERA—ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

The opera of "Fidelio" was performed Wednesday night at the Academy of music to a very large and thoroughly appreciative audience. The chief characters were sustained by Madame Johansen, Madame Von Berkel (Madame Rotter being sick), M. Habelman, M. Damrand, M. Steinecke, and M. Hermans. The world-wide reputation of Beethoven's wonderful music needs, indeed, from us but the heartfelt acknowledgement of the unqualified delight which we have received from listening to its profound and unapproachable beauties. In dramatic force, intensity of expression, and passionate declamation in their highest form, "Fidelio" stands unequalled in the whole range of operatic music. We deeply regret that it cannot be repeated.

Madame Johansen deserves the warmest praise for her conscientious and admirable rendering of the rôle of Leonora. Her voice was in excellent order, clear, steady, and resonant, and she sang and acted with an earnestness and dramatic power far beyond our expectations. We know no singer in the city who could have done such thorough justice to the difficult but magnificent rôle.

Florestan was finely rendered by Mr. Habelman. His scena is one of the most trying of dramatic compositions, but he mastered it most ably, and throughout the concerted music he was equally able and conscientious, acting also with spirit and earnestness. Hermans as Rocco was, as he always is, faithful and competent, his magnificent voice telling out with excellent effect.

"Fidelio" abounds with concerted music, splendid in construction, and by no means easy to master; much of it was excellently well sung, and encored, but other numbers were a little marred by the inequality of the voices, Madam Von Berkel not being quite equal to the rôle she was called on to sustain, and not too perfect. We do not intend to mention Herr Steinecke, and therefore omit his name. The choruses, especially the finale to the first act, were effectively rendered, and the orchestra, as a whole, saving a want of color, performed well, developing the wondrous beauties with which the score abounds.

**BRENTANO.**—We are indebted to Brentano for the prompt receipt of our foreign papers and periodicals. The second part of Doré's Illustrated Bible is now supplied by him to the lovers of Doré's vehement Art. It is pleasant to visit Brentano's—it is a museum of all the literary curiosities of the week and the hour.